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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

HINZE, LEO T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2854

DATE MAILED: 02/05/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/913,780

Applicant(s)

MOULIN, MICHEL

Examiner

Leo T. Hinze

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 January 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 47-87 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 47-87 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 1/2/2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6,8.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

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DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

It appears that "[SN ***]" on page 12, line 28, should be replaced with the appropriate serial number.

It appears that "two-axe" on page 16, line 17 should be --two-axis--.

It appears that "focussing" on page 2, line 5, should be --focusing--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 47 is objected to because of the following informalities: The elements of the claim are indicated by "(c)", "(d)", and "(e)", however, elements "(a)" and "(b)" are missing. It appears that the elements should be labeled "(a)", "(b)", and "(c)".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

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4. Claim 56 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The claim positively recites a "spatial modulator," a "laser emitter", and an "optic". These items are briefly discussed in the summary of the invention, but are not described in sufficient detail in the description.

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claims 1, 47, 49, 51, and 54-87 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term "low inertia element" in claims 1, 47, 85, and 87 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "low inertia" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. The limitation "element" in the claim has been rendered indefinite by the use of the term.

Regarding claim 56, it is not clear if the "at least one laser emitter" is the same "emitters" claimed in claim 47, or an additional emitter.

Regarding claim 57, it is not clear if the "at least one laser emitter" is the same "at least one laser emitter" of claim 56.

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Regarding claim 84, it is not clear if "its center of gravity" refers to the center of gravity of the optical head or the linear motor.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

8. Claims 1, 47, 48, 52, 55, 59-61, 63, 64, 66, and 68-70 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Rinke, et al.

Regarding claim 1, Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate (P), the system comprising: (a) drive means (55) for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement over stationary supporting elements (71); (b) at least one low inertia element effectively connecting the printing plate and the drive means; (c) an optical head (25)

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movably mounted on a stationary bridge (79) extending across the direction of movement of the printing plate and being provided for emitting radiant energy (21L, 21R) onto the printing plate.

Regarding claim 47, Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate (P), the system comprising: (c) a carriage (11) for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement over stationary supporting elements; (d) at least one low inertia element connecting the printing plate and the carriage; and (e) an optical head (25) movably mounted on a stationary bridge (79) extending across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters (21L, 21R) for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate.

Regarding claim 48, Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate (P), the system comprising: (a) an optical head (25) movably mounted on a stationary bridge (79) extending across a direction of movement of the printing plate; and (b) a radiant energy emitting source (21L, 21R) provided at or in the optical head emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate.

Regarding claim 52, Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate (P), the system comprising: (a) a carriage (11) for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement; and (b) a carriage member (51) connecting the printing plate and the carriage, wherein the carriage member is provided in a center position of a support area supporting the printing plate.

Regarding claim 55, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a

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printing plate wherein the printing plate comprises a thermosensitive or photosensitive (e.g. col. 1, lines 41-43) material.

Regarding claim 59, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate wherein the carriage is supportingly guided by at least one element (71).

Regarding claim 60, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate wherein the carriage comprises at least one vacuum gripper (71) holding the printing plate.

Regarding claim 61, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate wherein the carriage comprises a carriage member located in the middle of the width of the flat bed (e.g. Fig. 4).

Regarding claim 63, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate further comprising printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined and centered position prior to imaging (e.g. Fig. 5).

Regarding claim 64, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 63. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate wherein the printing plate positioning means comprise at least one positioning

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element (113) provided respectively laterally of a support area and at least one positioning element provided at a downstream end (103) of the support area.

Regarding claim 66, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 64. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate wherein at least one of the positioning elements is movable (113, e.g. Fig. 4).

Regarding claim 68, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate further comprising printing plate squaring means (113) to position the plate at a defined longitudinal position prior to imaging.

Regarding claim 69, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 68. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate in which the squaring means comprises two movable elements (113, Fig. 4).

Regarding claim 70, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 68. Rinke additionally teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate in which the plate is firmly abutted against a plurality of positioning elements by a friction pushing mechanism. The mechanism (113) pushes the plate against the friction caused by the contact of the plate with the platen (85).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 49 and 72 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Hinckley.

Rinke teaches:

- A flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising: (a) a carriage for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement; (b) a support for supporting the flat bed platesetter system; and (c) an optional storing and delivery (308) system for a plurality of printing plates having a support and delivery area which is downwardly inclined (e.g. Fig. 1) or inclinable (claim 49);
- wherein the support comprises a supporting surface divided into a loading zone (7) to receive plates to be imaged, an imaging zone (15) where plates are subjected to radiant energy and imaged, and an ejection zone (9) to receive the imaged plates (claim 72);

Rinke does not teach:

- a support for supporting the flat bed platesetter system in a downwardly inclined manner with respect to the direction of movement of the printing plate (claim 49).

Hinckley teaches a support system in a downwardly inclined manner with respect to the direction of movement of the supported item (e.g. Fig. 1) (claim 49).

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Regarding claim 49, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the supports of Rinke to be downwardly inclined, because Hinckley teaches that an inclined path allows one to make use of gravity to move articles.

Regarding claim 72, the combination of Rinke and Hinckley teaches all that is claimed as discussed above.

11. Claims 50, 65, and 67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al.

Regarding claim 50, Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising: (a) a carriage for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement; (b) an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge extending across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate; and (c) printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined position onto a support area prior to imaging wherein a first positioning element is provided at a downstream first side, second and third positioning elements are provided at a second opposite side, and at least a fourth positioning element is provided at a third lateral side of the support area.

Rinke does not teach wherein a first positioning element is provided at a first lateral side, second and third positioning elements are provided at the opposite second lateral side, and at least a fourth positioning element is provided at a downstream end of the support area.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to alter the positions of the positioning elements from the lateral to the

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downstream sides, because as long as the number and relative arrangements of supports are present, the positioning apparatus of Rinke is functionally equivalent to that which is claimed.

Regarding claims 65 and 67, Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claims 47 and 64, including:

- printing plate positioning means wherein a first positioning element is provided at a downstream first side, second and third positioning elements are provided at a second opposite side, and at least a fourth positioning element is provided at a third lateral side of the support area (claim 65);
- a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, further comprising an encoding system (E) for properly defining the position of a member (21L, 21R) along its path of movement (claim 67).

Rinke does not teach:

- A printing plate positioning means wherein a first positioning element is provided at a first lateral side, second and third positioning elements are provided at a second lateral side, and a fourth positioning element is provided at the downstream end of the support area (claim 65);
- further comprising an encoding system for properly defining the position of the carriage member (claim 67).

Regarding claim 65, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to alter the positions of the positioning elements from the lateral to the downstream sides, because as long as the number and relative arrangements of

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supports are present, the positioning apparatus of Rinke is functionally equivalent to that which is claimed.

Regarding claim 67, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to include an encoder for properly defining the position of the carriage member, because Rinke teaches that an encoder is advantageous for determining the precise longitudinal position of a moveable element, and one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that determining the precise longitudinal position of the carriage would be advantageous for improved performance.

12. Claims 51, 58, and 82 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Gladish.

Rinke teaches:

- a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising: (a) a support area movably supporting the printing plate in a direction of movement; (b) an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge extending across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate; and (c) a drive assembly connecting the printing plate and a carriage, wherein the drive assembly comprises: (i) a carriage member carrying the printing plate and optionally mounted on at least one bearing; (iii) an encoding system (E) for defining the position of an element (21L, 21R) along its path of movement (claim 51);

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- a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, wherein the carrier has a base located under a supporting bed with sliding elements and a protruding section carrying suction cups at the level of the supporting plate area (claim 82).

Rinke also teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47 (claim 58).

Rinke does not teach:

- an electric linear motor driving the carriage member; and an encoding system for defining the position of the printing plate (claim 51);
- wherein the carriage includes a longitudinally moving element of a linear motor (claim 58).

Gladish teaches an accumulation and storage system for pallets with a drive means that can involve any mechanism, including, in the alternative, hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders, reversible electric motors driving a rack and pinion set, sprocket and chain assembly, friction wheels, or linear motors (e.g. col. 2, lines 20-36) (claims 51 and 58).

Regarding claims 51 and 58, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to replace the pneumatic cylinders driving the carriage with a linear motor, because Gladish teaches that a linear motor is an acceptable alternative for driving a load over a support deck.

Regarding claim 82, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to include an encoder for properly defining the position of the carriage member, because Rinke teaches that an encoder is advantageous for determining the

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precise longitudinal position of a moveable element, and one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that determining the precise longitudinal position of the carriage would be advantageous for improved performance.

13. Claims 53 and 79 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Yaginuma.

Rinke teaches a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy on a printing plate, the system comprising: (a) an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge extending across a direction of movement of the printing plate; and (b) a carriage for moving the printing plate in the direction of movement.

Rinke does not teach wherein the carriage comprises at least one radiation intensity detector.

Yaginuma teaches an image forming apparatus for forming an image on a photosensitive sheet with a laser, including a photosensor (13) for detecting the intensity of the laser beam (e.g. col. 5, lines 26-27).

Regarding claim 53, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to include a radiation intensity detector, because Yaginuma teaches that such a detector is advantageous for improving reliability in an image forming apparatus.

Regarding claim 79, the above combination of Rinke and Yaginuma teaches all that is claimed as discussed above and in the rejection of claim 47.

14. Claims 54 and 71 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Eberhard.

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Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47, except for:

- a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, further comprising bearing means for movably supporting the printing plate in the direction of movement (claim 54);
- a flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, in which a plurality of low-friction elements are arranged to form a supporting surface extending the length of the platesetter (claim 71).

Eberhard teaches a conveying system, with a drive means, and a support system consisting of elongated arrays of idler rollers (3) extending longitudinally parallel next to each other (e.g. Fig. 2).

Regarding claims 54 and 71, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to include bearing means for movably supporting the printing plate in the direction of movement consisting of a plurality of low-friction elements are arranged to form a supporting surface extending the length of the platesetter, because Eberhard teaches that such an arrangement is advantageous for conveying articles without the need for special pallets or containers to hold the articles.

15. Claims 56 and 57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Thuren, et al.

Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47, including a laser emitter (21L, 21R).

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Rinke does not explicitly teach wherein the head comprises a spatial modulator and an optic forming the image of the modulator onto the printing plate, although these components are most likely present, as lasers are usually used with modulators and focusing optics.

Thuren teaches an apparatus for writing on a photosensitive substance using a laser, including a modulator (5), laser emitter (13), and focusing lens (15).

Regarding 56, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to include a spatial modulator and an optic forming the image of the modulator onto the printing plate, because Thuren teaches that these elements are advantageous for producing a pattern while affording a considerable increase in the degree of grid resolution without adversely affecting the writing speed.

Regarding claim 57, the above combination of Rinke and Thuren teaches all that is claimed.

16. Claim 62 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Hinckley.

Rinke teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 47, except wherein the system is inclined in the direction of movement of the printing plate.

Hinckley teaches a support system in a downwardly inclined manner with respect to the direction of movement of the supported item (e.g. Fig. 1) (claim 49).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Rinke to be downwardly inclined, because Hinckley teaches that an inclined path allows one to make use of gravity to move articles.

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17. Claims 73 and 74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., and Hinckley, and further in view of Eberhard.

The combination of Rinke and Hinckley teaches all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claims 47 and 72, except wherein the loading zone comprises arrays of parallel, longitudinally aligned roller-bearing channels, disposed on each side of the path of the carriage, to receive and support plates.

Eberhard teaches a conveying system, with a drive means, and a support system consisting of elongated arrays of idler rollers (3) extending longitudinally parallel next to each other (e.g. Fig. 2), the arrays disposed on each side of the path of a belt (2).

Regarding claims 73 and 74, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Rinke wherein the loading zone comprises arrays of parallel, longitudinally aligned roller-bearing channels, disposed on each side of the path of the carriage, to receive and support plates, because Eberhard teaches that such an arrangement is advantageous for conveying articles without the need for special pallets or containers to hold the articles.

18. Claim 75 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., Hinckley, and Eberhard, and further in view of Tipton, et al.

Rinke, Hinckley, and Eberhard teach all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 73, except wherein one of the roller-bearing channels is movable.

Tipton teaches a system with a plurality of roller-bearing channels (22, 24) which are movable (e.g. Fig. 13, slots 54).

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Rinke wherein the roller-bearing channels are moveable, because Tipton teaches that such an arrangement is less expensive to manufacture than other arrangements.

19. Claims 76 and 77 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., Hinckley, and Eberhard, and further in view of Weeks, et al.

Rinke, Hinckley, and Eberhard teach all that is claimed as discussed in the above rejection of claim 72, except:

- wherein the supporting zone includes a plurality of rows of bearings inserted in solid plates (claim 76);
- wherein a plurality of rows of pressure bearings maintain the plate against rows of precision bearings (claim 77).

Weeks teaches a laser cutting machine with bed for supporting plates or sheets, wherein the bed (14) is a ball-transfer table, and the laser head (28) has roller balls (52) positioned in its bottom operating surface, opposite sets of roller balls (56) in a support assembly (46).

Regarding claims 76 and 77, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Rinke wherein the supporting zone includes a plurality of rows of bearings inserted in solid plates and wherein a plurality of rows of pressure bearings maintain the plate against rows of precision bearings, because Weeks teaches that such an arrangement is advantageous for precise positioning of the sheets.

20. Claim 87 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rinke, et al., in view of Lewis, et al.

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Rinke teaches a method for imaging a printing plate with radiant energy in a flat bed platesetter, the method comprising: (a) providing a flat bed platesetter having a support area, wherein the platesetter comprises: (i) a carriage for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement over stationary supporting elements; (ii) at least one low inertia element connecting the printing plate and the carriage; and (iii) an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge extending across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate; (b) providing a printing plate on a support area of the flat bed platesetter; (c) positioning the printing plate on the support area; (d) moving the printing plate in a first direction; and (e) moving a radiant energy emitting head to provide an image on the printing plate.

Rinke does not teach moving a radiant energy emitting head in a second direction substantially perpendicular to the first direction.

Lewis teaches a method for laser imaging lithographic printing plates, wherein the laser head is moved perpendicular to the direction of the plate.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Rinke to move the laser head perpendicular to the plate direction, because Lewis teaches that this is advantageous for rapid, efficient production of lithographic printing plates using relatively inexpensive laser equipment.

Allowable Subject Matter

21. Claim 85 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

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22. Claims 78, 80, 81, 83, 84, and 86 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

23. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding claim 85, the prior art neither anticipates or renders obvious the combination of two flat bed platesetter systems in conjunction with a transport assembly including a feed chain, an exit chain and at least two branch chains located between the feed chain and the exit chain, wherein each of the flat bed platesetter systems is located in one of the branch chains.

Regarding claim 78, the prior art neither anticipates or renders obvious wherein the pressure bearings are offset in relation to corresponding precision bearings.

Regarding claims 80 and 81, the use of sensors to detect the presence of a sheet edge in a laser-based lithographic plate system is known. However, the specific arrangement of placing the detectors on a carriage used to transport the sheet through a platesetter system is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the prior art.

Regarding claim 83, it is known in the art to balance the weight of a moveable head on a rail. However, the prior art neither anticipates or renders obvious the balanced mounting of an optical head with the claimed components.

24. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's reply must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

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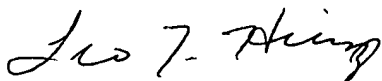
Conclusion

25. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

26. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leo T. Hinze whose telephone number is (703) 305-3339. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Hirshfeld can be reached on (703) 305-6619. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7722 for regular communications and (703) 308-7722 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-0952.



Leo T. Hinze
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AU 2854
January 21, 2003



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